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ABSTRACT

This manual is aimed at employed people who want to think about where they are in their careers and in their lives, what they are doing now and what they might want to do in the future, and how they can set about improving their education and training and their future employability. It can be used by individuals or in a group context, and a short facilitator's guide is included in the materials. The manual has seven sections that take the user through a process of reflection and planning, the completion of which results in the production of a learning action plan for the future. Titles of the seven sections are as follows: (1) "Where Am I?"; (2) "How Did I Get Here? How Did I Learn?"; (3) "What Skills Do I Need Now?"; (4) "How Do I Feel about Where I Am Now?"; (5) "What Steps Do I Want To Take?" Who Can Help?"; (6) "Where Do I Want the Steps to Lead?"; and (7) "What Must I Do Next?" Each section includes a series of exercises leading to the production of a learning action plan. Suggestions to fill in the tables are found in the facilitator's guide (Section 8) but also in the main text (in italics). A short introductory module designed for use by those who feel the need for support before tackling the main exercises appears as an appendix. (YLB)

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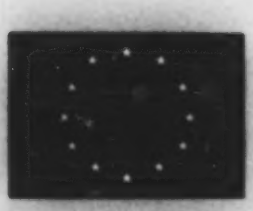
ED 423 449

Your Life Your Work

Your Future

A Self-Development Pack



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Your Future

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Introduction

This material has been produced with the support of European Union LEONARDO DA VINCI programme and is an outcome of the work of a project partnership based in France, Greece, Ireland and the UK. A full list of partners is included at the back of this pack.

The pack is aimed at people in work who want to think about where they are in their careers and in their lives, what they are doing now and what they might want to do in the future and how they can set about improving their education and training and so their future employability. It can be used by anybody who might benefit from it, but should be of greatest use to those who need to improve their skills to allow for their development.

The pack can be used by individuals or in a group context and a short facilitator's guide is included in the materials. There is also a short introductory module, designed for use by those who feel the need for support before tackling the main exercises.

This pack was written by P.J. O'Rourke, Project Consultant

Using this pack

This pack has seven sections, taking you through a process of reflection and planning which will let you, when you have completed it, produce a learning action plan for yourself and your future. You may have used the short, introductory exercises. If you have, there may be a small amount of repetition. If this is so, then use the introductory material to help you to start working through this pack.

You may be doing this on your own, or with a group of others. If you are working through it individually, then you will find the facilitator's guide useful as you go along.

Make sure that you work through the programme in sequence and do not be worried if you find yourself coming back to material in the later stages. This is because the process builds up to your plan, and you may need to take a different look at things as you go along.

You will find suggestions to help fill in the tables in the facilitator's guide but also in the main text. These are in italics, where they appear in the main text.

If you are working on your own, don't worry about time. Take as long as you need for each section and take regular breaks when you want to. You do not have to finish this in one session, you can plan how best to do it. You may, for example, want to allow yourself time to talk with colleagues, friends or family or to take advice from work or other sources.

This pack is personal to you and you will know the answers to the questions posed in it. There are no right or wrong answers, as the responses come from your life and your experiences. It does not matter what direction you head in nor does it particularly matter what you decide each question means, as long as you are answering it for yourself. This does not mean that you have to do this alone. If you do it in a group, then the discussions around each section can help you when you come to deal with the questions for yourself, and sharing your experiences is always useful.

If you are doing it alone, it is worth thinking about whom you might want to talk to and to take advice from on many sections of the pack. This could be a friend, family member or a colleague, or it could be your supervisor or manager from work, an educational advice worker or some other professional agent.

What is most important about this pack is that it is a tool for you to use to help you think about yourself, your life and how you are going to control your future. Like any tool, you may need help in learning to use it. Do not be afraid to ask. Above all, enjoy doing it – it is fun to think!

Paddy O'Rourke
1998

1. Where am I?

This pack is about helping yourself to decide where you want to go and how to make the first steps down the road that will get you there.

Before you begin a journey, you have to know where you are starting from, and this section of the pack is about you deciding where you are now so that you can plan your future route. Mind you, having an idea of where you might want to go will help as well.

A good beginning, if you are planning a journey, is to ask "Where do I want to go?"

At this stage, you may not be sure about this but it is worth thinking about where you want to be in say, 5 years' time. This may be simply a direction, or you may already have a definite aim in mind, either in terms of your present job or, maybe, something completely different. Do not just think about work. Think about the other parts of your life.

So, where do you want to be in 5 years? Remember, it does not have to be detailed!

In five years, I want to be :

At work

At home

In my spare time

In the community

So, now you have a direction or destination in mind, what next?

It has to be a look at the starting point - where are you now?

All too often we only think about what we have learned and what we can do in terms of examinations passed or formal training done and we forget about all the other experiences and skills we have. We do not put enough value on things that are important and useful, because the system we've been through does not recognise everything we have and so, nor do we.

We all have skills but may not be sure what this means. If we look at what a skill really is, we will find that we are skilled in ways we did not realise and that there are things we do well and can build on.

What is a skill?

The easy answer is that a skill is anything that we can do well, whether it relates to work, home or leisure. Many of the skills you have are not directly related to work, but come from other places. This does not mean that skills developed outside work will not be useful in work so you need to look at all the skills you have.

The three places we are most likely to develop skills in are at work, at home and during our leisure.

Examples of the kind of things you might write down as skills are :

Communication skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing)
Number skills
Using computers
Skills with people
Manual skills (using your hands)
Driving
Sports skills
Organisational skills (filing, administration, management skills, planning skills)
Gardening skills
Child care skills
Cooking activities
Knowledge of the arts (of any kind)
Financial skills (budgeting, planning shopping and many others) Drawing or painting
Cleaning skills (at home or at work).

The problem is that the list above could get very long, and still not cover all the possible skills you might want to include. It should, however, give you some ideas to help you fill out the table.

Remember, a skill that you use at work, say reading or writing skills, is also one you will use at home and in your leisure. Manual skills developed through sport or hobbies may be used at work as much as manual skills learned for work might be used in the home. Many of your skills are of use in a range of situations.

Fill out the table by making lists of the skills you use in the three places. Do not be surprised if some skills appear in more than one list. When you have finished, you will have made up your "skills bank".

My skills bank

Skills at work	Skills at home	Skills at leisure

When you have finished, why not talk your list through with a friend or relative? They may be able to help you add to your bank, by pointing out skills that you have not recognised in yourself.

Later you will be looking at your skills bank again to see what you want to develop more but, for the time being, here are some questions to answer.

Which skills appear in more than one list?

Where did you learn the different skills?

Are there any skills that you used to have that you have lost? What do you think you need to do to get them back?

Which skill did you most enjoy learning and why?

Now you have your skills bank, and you know what you can do, the next step is to see how your skills are recognised.

What you need to do is list your skills in one column and beside each one say how that skill has been recognised. The recognition can be in a number of ways, such as by a qualification or certificate or by an assessment. It could be something that you put in a CV, a responsibility you have had, or something you have done, made, written or otherwise succeeded in. It might be problems you have solved, testimonials you have been given or promotion or a new job at work. Some of the recognition will be formal (qualifications and so on) and some informal.

Skills	How recognised

You have thought about where you want to go, and worked out what you already know and can do, in other words, your present skills.

Now it is time to move on to the next section and to start thinking about how you have got to where you are.

2. How did I get here? How did I learn?

If you know where you are and you want to move on, then it makes sense to think about how you got to here and which ways of progressing have been easier for you to use than others.

This material gives you the chance to think about this and to look at what has helped you learn in the past.

First, think about learning.

In the first part of the pack, you filled out your skills bank but did you write down the learning skills that you have?

There are a lot of things that we take for granted and that we do as a matter of course which are related to learning, which help us learn and which are learning skills!

Over the page is a list of words which can be used to describe learning skills and beside each is a space. Complete the table by saying how you think each of the skills listed helps you in learning.

This is about how you learn and what helps you learn, so do remember that there are no "right or wrong" answers.

To help you, however, you might think about each activity in this way:

- *What does it mean? (e.g., what is memorising?)*
- *Does it help me learn?*
- *If it helps me learn, then how? (For example, observing may give you more information, or help you understand how something works; asking questions may do the same thing or may help in some other way.)*

This should help you to do this exercise but as we are talking about your learning, you decide what suits you best!

Are there any other skills you want to add in the blank lines?

Learning skill	How the skill helps me to learn
Memorising	
Analysing	
Observing	
Asking questions	
Getting information	
Comparing	
Making connections	
Making choices	
Problem solving	
Taking action	
Forward thinking	
Making summaries	

Remember, nobody can say that there is a right way, or a wrong way of learning. Only you can say what has worked for you and what has helped you learn the most, and in the best way!

You may enjoy finding things out for yourself or you could prefer learning with others in a more formal way or you might like a mixture of the two. Perhaps what you are learning may affect the circumstances under which you learn best!

To help you look at how you learn, try this exercise:

What, when and how I learned!

We all have things we have learned which are important to us. They may be simple things or could be a complex series of skills.

Think of four different things that you have learned that were, and still are, important to you.

Now, for each one, think carefully about what you learned, when you learned, how you learned and, lastly, what it was that most helped you learn it.

To help you with this, you might like a few ideas. What you learned and when are straightforward, but how and what helped most are a little more complicated!

In terms of how, think about this:

Did you learn whatever it was by reading about it, being told about it, being shown how to do it, by trial and error, by practising it, by thinking about it, from film or video or any other medium, by research or by a combination of these or any other ways of learning? Were you taught by somebody else, or did you learn it on your own? Were you in a group, was the process formal or informal and did you have to undergo some kind of testing or accreditation? Did you learn in a way not written here - what was it?

For what helped you learn it, decide what factors you believe most helped you to learn. Was it your interest, did you have a particularly inspiring teacher or instructor, was there some kind of reward or sanction to be applied if you did or did not succeed, was it a target that you set yourself or anything else that you can define which caused you to want to learn, helped you to keep learning and supported your successful learning? It will be worthwhile considering which factors were internal, that is from within yourself, and which were external, from the job, peer pressure, fashion or anything else.

Now, fill out the table below:

What I learned	When I learned it	How I learned it	What helped me most to learn it

Let us take a look at the learning skills list again, but in a slightly different way.

This time, the skill is described as something you do, and one or two other statements have been added. Tick the box that describes you best.

	Always	Most times	Seldom	Never
I memorise things easily				
I work out the meaning of things				
I notice what is around me				
I ask questions and think about the answers				
I use sources of information (the media, libraries, etc.)				
I measure what I find out against things I know				
I see links between things				
I choose how best to do things				
I use information and experience to choose solutions				
I act when I have decided				
I think about consequences				
I select important bits of information				
I enjoy learning new things				
I share what I learn				

Lastly, in this section, think about these questions :

- How do I learn best – alone, in a group, with an instructor, from books, by doing, by watching, by any other way or by a lot of different ways?
- What makes me want to learn?
- What gets me started on learning?
- What keeps me learning?
- What stops me learning?
- How do other people affect my learning?

Now, think about how you feel about learning and your learning skills. How could you increase them?

3. What skills do I need now?

In the first section of this pack, you made up your skills bank.

Now you will have the chance to think more about your skills, how they relate to the work that you do and what new skills you may need to develop to help you in your job.

Go back to your skills bank and use it to fill out this table. This time, show what you use your skills for at work and how you learned each of them – what did you do to learn them?

Skill	I use this skill at work by :	I learned this skill by :

Look at your skills. Which of them have you learned in the last 3 years? Which in the last 5 years? Which in the last 10 years?

You should be able to make a list showing how your skills have changed in the last 10 years. At the same time, think about why you needed to change your skills. Did the firm get new equipment, did technology take over part of your job, have the ways of doing things changed, did you develop better ways of working?

Fill in the table, to show what new skills you have learned and, beside each one, why you had to learn the new skill. You will see that the table goes from 10 years ago to now. Please try to fill the table out in the order things happened!

? years ago	The new skill I learned was	I changed or developed my skill because
10 years		
5 years		
Last year		
Now		

What you have done is assess the work skills you have now and look at how and why your skills have changed in the last 10 years. This should help you to see that learning goes on all the time and that, even though you may not notice when it happens, you have learned new skills as time has gone by.

The other thing that you have done is consider why you needed to develop your skills or learn new ones. Our workplace changes: sometimes slowly, sometimes more quickly. To cope with change, we change the way we work.

To finish this section, you need to look into the future.

Do you think that your work is going to change in the next few years?

Will the skills you have now be enough to keep you in work, get you promoted or let you move on?

You need to think of three things :

What your job is now
What your job was when you started it
What your job might become in 5 years' time.

The first two are easy – all you need is your knowledge of your normal day and something to write with. Filling out the last table will have got you ready for this task!

Write down the main tasks of your job as you do it now and as you did it when you first started.

My main tasks now are :	My main tasks when I started the job were :

Now list the ways your job has changed.

My job has changed in these ways: It changed because:

Now you need to be a fortune teller!

Thinking about how the firm you work for and how your work has changed in the last few years, how do you think things will change in the next 5 years?

To help you with this, here are some more exercises for you to do.

You have already thought about past changes and how you dealt with them, but you need to think a little about the firm, and what might be happening to it. You also need to think a little about what is going on in the environment the firm is working in. When you have done this, you will be ready to look to your future!

Answer the questions below :

You may find it will help to talk about these with workmates!

What does the company/organisation do? What is its main function?

What has been the most important development in the company/organisation in the past few years?

How did this affect my work?

How did this affect my prospects?

What has been the most important development outside the company in the past few years?

How did this affect the company?

How did this affect my work?

How did this affect my prospects?

What is happening now that might change the way I work?

How will this affect me?

What should I do to cope with the changes?

What will my job be like in 5 years' time?

Will I need new skills to do it?

What will they be?

It may be that, in 5 years' time, you want to be working somewhere else, or in another job for the same company.

If this is so, then why not start thinking now about what new skills you might need to develop?

List them below :

So that I can move on, I need to develop my skills in:

In this section, you have thought about how you have changed and how your work and working environment has changed in the last few years. This has let you look at how you may need to change in the future. Now we go on to see how to do this!

4. How do I feel about where I am now?

Before you can really start to think about how you want to develop yourself and your career, you need to give a little time to thinking about how you feel about where you are now and how satisfied you are about your life at work and outside work.

Doing this will help you to decide what changes you might want to make and what direction you want to go in. It might also help you decide that you are satisfied with where you are in work, but want to develop some other aspect of your life!

As before, here are some tables for you to fill out. The table for Work has some suggestions for areas for you think about, followed by blanks for you to add to. The other two, Leisure and Personal, have been left blank for you to decide which areas you want to look at.

Each table has 3 columns. Please complete each of them.

Column 1 describes the area you are looking at.

In Column 2, please say how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with that aspect of your life, by writing in a figure from 1 to 5, with 1 if you are very satisfied and 5 if you are very dissatisfied.

In Column 3, decide if you want to take action to increase your satisfaction and write in one thing which would, for you, make things better!

Work satisfaction table

Factor	Satisfaction level (1 to 5)	I want to take action. One thing that will help is:
Day to day routine.		
Company management style		
Relationships with colleagues		
Promotion prospects		
Working conditions		
Training I have been given		

Leisure satisfaction table

The leisure satisfaction table does not have suggested factors. This is because people vary so to offer a list could set boundaries unnecessarily.

To help, however, factors you could look at might include: do I enjoy my leisure time and is there enough variation in my activities? Do I have enough contact with other people? Am I learning through leisure? Am I satisfied with the level of my activity? Do my leisure activities "stretch" me at all? Overall, am I satisfied with what I do with my time? There may well be other factors you want to use. Feel free!

Factor	Satisfaction level (1 to 5)	I want to take action. One thing that will help is:

Personal satisfaction table

As with the leisure table, this is a personal matter. You could think about yourself, what you do and what you feel about yourself. Are you satisfied with the way you look, the way you behave, the way you relate to other people? What about your ambitions - are you happy with them? Your home life might be worth thinking about – are there things you feel you should change there?

Do make sure that you think about yourself in a positive way even though it is often easier to see faults in ourselves than the good things!

If you want to talk to somebody about this and the leisure table then do so, but if you would rather not, they do belong to you and are private to you. If you are doing this in a group, then the facilitator will offer you the chance to discuss what you have put. Often, discussing this kind of reflection is useful, but if you do not want to, you do not have to!

Factor	Satisfaction level (1 to 5)	I want to take action. One thing that will help is:

When you have finished each table, work out your average satisfaction score. To do this, add together the numbers in column 2, and then divide that number by the total number of factors you have scored. Fill this in in the spaces below. The lower your score, the higher your satisfaction!

Table	Satisfaction score
Work	
Leisure	
Home	

Now you have taken the chance to think about these things, you are well on the way to setting some targets and making an action list for yourself, and can start to think about the steps you might want to take.

5. What steps do I want to take? Who can help?

Now you are about to start work on making a learning and development plan for yourself.

You need to think about what steps you should take and who can help you in taking action, by giving you advice, guidance and support.

You need to decide whether or not you should use formal or informal ways of progressing, although you will probably end up using a mixture of both!

We are going to identify the steps you might take by looking back at how you learn in a little more detail, by examining learning opportunities (ways, places or chances for you to learn).

We will concentrate on learning at work.

Remember - everything you do at work <u>can</u> give you a chance to learn!

Below is a list of the <u>formal</u> ways you might be offered learning opportunities. These are likely to come about because your managers want you to do something; take on extra responsibility or change your job in some way. This may be part of a plan or scheme and will, probably, be recognised as a learning opportunity.

The table lists some of the chances you might be offered. You need to decide which you have used before, which you would want to use in the future and how you would want to get access to chances in the future (the steps you are willing to take!).

As usual, there are spaces left for you to add to from your own experiences.

The column headed **"I will do this by"** *in this table and in the later table on informal chances is there for you to show how you are going to take up the chances that there are. You might put "going to college" or "using distance learning" as a way of going on courses, although these are not the only ways. In this table, if you decide you want to use any particular chance, then put down, in this column, what you will do, or who you will ask, to get you started.*

Formal chances for education and development

Chances	Used before?	Want to use?	I will do this by?
Going on courses			
Being shown how to do tasks			
Being advised or counselled			
Shadowing a colleague			
Doing somebody elseís job			
Being part of discussion about work			
Having additional responsibilities			
Joining a ìquality circleî			
Taking on Trade Union work			
Giving advice and support			
Reading and studying the job			
Being given "on the job" training			

One problem is that informal opportunities are not always recognised as chances to learn and so may be wasted if you cannot take real advantage by using them to prove your experience, abilities or skills.

The next table is blank. Fill in the informal chances to learn that you have had. These will be chances which do not come from some kind of scheme or plan within the firm, but will, instead, be chances which have come about because you have done things, or your colleagues or supervisors have asked you to do something at work. Some of them may be the same as the formal chances listed above - not all firms see things the same way!

This time, in the last column, show how you might prove what you have learned from taking advantage of such chances.

Informal chances for education and development

Chance taken	My way of proving what I have learned

There is one last list for <u>you</u> to make in this section and it is to do with informal chances.

Are there any informal chances that you know of that you have not been able to access, but would like to? List them in the space below. How do you think you might get access to them?

Informal chances I want to access

Chance I want to take	I will do this by

If you look at what you have put under 'I will do this by' in these tables, you will see that you have a list of steps that you want to take!

Now, let us see who can help you to get started.

Very few people can learn without help from others. We need a supportive environment which comes from family, friends and colleagues as well as from management and from people such as trainers and teachers

A lot of learning happens away from work, so the list below is in sections, covering workplace and home leisure. A third section covers organisations which can offer help and advice. You need to find out the names of organisations in your country which can help you. Where is this information available? Some suggestions are included in the table. There are others!

Who can help me learn?

At work	At home/leisure	Organisations
My supervisor	My partner	Trades Unions
Personnel Department	My children	Advice Bureaux
Training staff	My children	Unemployment centres
My manager	My friends and neighbours	Community organisations
Colleagues	Other members of clubs and associations that I belong to	Employment agencies
		Other local agencies or individuals.

Now, you have the steps you want to take, and who can help you!

6. Where do I want the steps to lead?

This section is quite short, and is an extension of something you did right at the start of this pack.

You thought about where you wanted to be in 5 years' time.

Now, you need to do a little more.

Below are a series of tables relating to different parts of your life. They start with you as a person, and go through home, work, leisure and the community, asking you where you are now, where you want to be in the future, what you want to be doing then and how you want to get there.

This time, you get to set the timescale.

I am now someone who:

In _____ years' time I want to be:

I would like to be doing:

I will get there by:

In my home, I am now someone who:

In _____ years' time I want to be:

Doing:

I will get there by:

In my work, I am now someone who:

In _____ years' time I want to be:

Doing:

I will get there by:

In my leisure, I am now someone who:

In _____ years' time I want to be:

Doing:

I will get there by:

Now you have a set of ambitions – things that you would like to do, which would make you feel happier, more satisfied, perhaps give you a job with more satisfaction and you have some broad targets to think about in designing your plan.

These make up your overall goals for the next few years and, without any great details, how you will set about achieving them.

7. What must I do next?

So far, you have looked at what you have learned, and how you learn best, what skills you have, and how they have changed over the years, the skills you might need soon and why you need to develop new skills and further your education. As well, you thought about how satisfied you are with your life and the things that might help you gain more satisfaction, what routes there are to learning and who can help you learn and where you want to be in future years.

Now, you have to put all this together so that you can make your plan and draw up an action list.

First, think about what you want to do in the future. What are your goals? (It will help if you look at what you have said in the last section.)

Think about your goals in terms of your working, social, home and personal development. You may find that there is some overlap! If you have more than one goal, that is all right, but you should remember that you can't do everything in one go, so be prepared to think about how you will achieve your goals, and in what order.

Now fill in your goals below.

My Goals

At work	
In my social life	
At home	
In my personal development	

Now think about the things you can do, or have learned in the past, that you can use to achieve your goals. You will find that the tables you filled in earlier will help you with this.

The next table for you to complete asks you to relate your goals to what you can already do and what more you will need to do to achieve them.

List your goals in the first column and, beside each one list the things you can do, or have learned (that is your skills) that will help you reach the goal in column 2.

Please do not fill out the third column yet!

My goals	Skills I have already that can help me reach my goals	Learning I must undertake to help reach my goals

Now to fill out the third column. Here you must think about what you want, or need, to learn.

Remember, there are several factors in learning. You can learn from experience, you can learn skills, you can develop attitudes and your values and you can increase the things you know about and that you understand. Most learning involves a combination of factors and we do learn in different ways. So, you might want to learn how to improve on what you currently do, or something completely new. You might want to learn to understand something or to increase the levels of your formal qualifications. Probably, you will want to combine new and old, understanding and doing, qualifying and experiencing.

With this in mind, please fill in the third column, putting down the learning you believe you will need to do to achieve your goals. Do not worry, at this stage, about how you are going to do the learning. You are nearly ready to fill out your action plan, but there is still a little to do before completing it. Talk to people from the list showing who can help you learn. Who you talk to may depend on what kind of advice and support you want and what kind of questions you are asking.

Tell them what you have been doing and what your goals are. Ask them what they think your strengths and weaknesses are and how you can best develop yourself. If you need advice on training or other learning opportunities, then ask for it, either informally or by going to one of the agencies on the list.

Go back to the section on how you learn. What learning styles have worked for you? Try to find learning opportunities that suit you. For example, if you want to do a formal qualification, then find out how the course you want to do is delivered (this may happen in more than one way), how it is examined and if there are alternative ways of getting the qualification or alternative qualifications.

Putting together all this information will let you make decisions and complete you action plan. The plan says what you want to learn, how you will learn it, when you will have learned it and how you will prove that you have learned it. So – now, if you are ready, fill out your action plan!

My learning action plan

I will learn:	How I will learn it:	I will have learned it by (date)	I will prove that I have learned by:

The Start Up List

You have one more thing to do before you get started fulfilling your learning action plan and that is making up your Start Up list.

This is very simple. Look at your learning action plan and decide exactly what you have to do to get started, and when you are going to do it. This could include things like getting information, finding courses, talking to managers, colleagues and so on, getting advice and help and all the different things you might have to do to get going.

Fill out the list. It is your promise to yourself! As you carry out each action, tick it off in the column provided.

My start up list

Things to do before I can start	✓ = done!

Meeting and reviewing the plan

Learning is continuous – it goes on throughout your life. You need to regularly look at your plan and your goals so as to check how you are doing, to update your list of things learned and to review and, perhaps change your goals and your chosen ways of achieving them.

Think about whether or not you have achieved your goals in the timescale.

Perhaps you have not met your targets. Could this be because you expected too much or you need to motivate yourself for one reason or another? Maybe the opportunities are not there. Whatever the reasons, look at your plan and your goals and revise it to suit yourself. Do not forget to talk to people who can help you!

It may be that you reached your targets early. Could you have underestimated your abilities? Revise your plan, if you feel you can do more!

Lastly, when you have reached all the goals in this plan, where next?

8. Your Life, Your Work, Your Future: Facilitators' Guide

People who use this self-development pack are involved in learning as they are developing insights into themselves, their needs, their hopes and their ambitions.

Adults learn in complex ways, but one of the best and most supportive methods involves using past experience to provide the basis for reflection, coming to decisions and planning further experiences – that is further development. This pack aims to use this learning style whilst allowing for delivery of appropriate new information.

This means that facilitators supporting users must remind themselves of some of the characteristics of effective facilitation.

Facilitators are enablers. They must:

- Plan
- Organise
- Prepare
- Give clear instructions
- Be ready to clarify and explain
- Be flexible
- Be adaptive
- Be able to listen
- Be able to modify and change in response to the group's needs
- Be supportive
- Give praise and encouragement
- Guide, but not direct
- Suggest but not tell
- Support individual development
- Signpost new routes and avenues for the learners.

Facilitators, in short, must serve the learners by providing the right conditions to support effective learning. They must have a positive attitude towards learners and their needs; knowledge of the learners, of method and of content; resources using self, learners, the environment and appropriate material; and, lastly, the imagination to use the material in as exciting and interesting a way as possible.

The pack is designed to benefit people in work who want to think about their current position, their skills and previous learning and their future. It should allow them to assess where they are, what their skills and abilities potentially fit them for and start them on the process of planning their progression.

It is usable by persons of different backgrounds and attainments and has, as a part of it, an introductory module for those who need some additional support in getting started.

There is a benefit to be gained by employers as well, in that a motivated and forward-looking workforce will be more productive than one which is depressed, introverted and convinced that there is little or no progress for individuals. Developing and bringing forward staff from within, rather than depending on outside recruitment is a cost-effective way of creating a skilled workforce!

Using the pack

The main pack is laid out in 7 sections with an introduction and asks the user to carry out a series of exercises leading to the production of a learning action plan.

The introductory module is shorter, looks at fewer variables and leads to development of a short-term plan. It is designed to help those who have little experience of this type of learning and should allow them to move on to the main pack, if they wish.

The exercises are accompanied by text explaining how to use the pack and, in some cases, offering suggestions for responses. Much of the guide for facilitators, therefore, is included in the pack.

Group size

Learners doing this kind of work will benefit from a supportive atmosphere so small groups (no more than 6-8?) are probably best. Individual learners are likely to need advice and support but also a listener, so set aside time for this.

Room layout

Each participant needs their own space, but also needs to be able to interact with the group, so an arrangement that allows writing space for individual exercises whilst letting the group interact would be best - a horse-shoe of tables, perhaps?

Delivery mechanism

This is group work so discussion followed by reflection will be the key. As facilitator, you will need to act as both a resource and stimulant, not as a director, and be willing to offer individual support, as needed.

Timing

This will vary with circumstances. Responses are individual, so some may need more time than others. With support, the introductory module should take 2-3 hours or less and the main pack can be finished in a day. It may be that the main pack will work best for some people over a series of sessions on different days. You will know the group or individuals. You must decide, as part of your planning, how to handle this.

Teaching aids needed

With a group some form of recording group responses, such as a flip-chart or board, will be needed, together with whatever supporting material you choose to use and appropriate display technology. It would be wise to have some ice-breaking exercises on hand, for any new group. The facilitator will need information resources on training, learning and guidance opportunities, systems and agencies and on any other matters which the exercises might raise.

The exercises

It is important to emphasise that there are no right or wrong answers to exercises. This is stated in the pack (under "Using this pack"). Each exercise needs to be worked through in the most appropriate way. In the following pages, you will find some suggestions to help you and the users.

Section 1

This section deals with the participants' present position, how they reached it and what skills they have. As such, it is a fairly individual exercise, but group discussion around skills and how to define them will be useful, particularly if the group members already know each other.

To help in identification of skills, pairs work, particularly in defining skills at work, could be helpful. In the text, there is a list of skills. This is not an exhaustive list but can, and should, be added to in relation to the group being worked with. There does not seem to be any benefit to be gained from adding to the suggestions here, as a definitive list would be very long. It is worth remembering, however, that we are asking individuals to define their skills, in their own terms, so make allowances for this.

Section 2

This section covers learning and the text offers a fair degree of guidance. A discussion around learning and the terms used in the text will greatly aid the individual work in this section, so you should consider starting with this. It might also help if the completion of the first table in this section was done as a group exercise, so allowing for discussion of each learning skill in turn.

The second table has several examples in the text, but you may need to think up other, more locally appropriate ones. Again, some support may be needed in completing "What I learned". The third table may need some explanations of the terms, but should be straightforward and the final questions could be dealt with individually or could form the basis for a group discussion.

Section 3

This deals with changing skills and, as such, is particular to the individual, at least in the first part. If the earlier sections have been completed successfully, then the first table in this section should not offer any problems. The second table will need a little time for participants to reflect before completing it and a chance to talk it through with another group member will help.

The rest of this section deals with changes at work. If the group members all come from the same employer, then a group discussion will develop material to help answer the questions. If this is not the case, then a more general discussion, followed by one-to-one work might be more appropriate.

Section 4

This is a very individual section so, apart from the introduction, group work may not be appropriate here. If the group do want, however, to discuss the results of their individual consideration, and all are happy to do so, then fine, but approach this, and this whole section, with care.

There are some suggestions for factors in the tables written in the text. To suggest more, without knowing about the group involved, would not be appropriate in this guide. The facilitator will need to have some ideas based upon his/her knowledge of the group.

Section 5

This section starts the process of planning. The text is self- explanatory, and a preliminary discussion with the group will enable completion of the next stage, as individuals complete the exercises. The list of formal chances is fairly complete, but there may be some that are not included, so feel free to add them.

The informal chance lists have been left empty deliberately. The participants need to realise that almost anything can be a chance to learn, so try to guide a discussion along this line. It is worth pointing out that several of the chances cited as formal may, in some circumstances, be informal chances.

As an aid, here are a few other possible chances of informal learning: making mistakes, going to conferences, dealing with people, domestic tasks, meeting people, interviewing, coping with change, project work, planning, being appraised, making decisions ... The list could be endless! The columns headed "I will do this by" can only be filled out with local knowledge of systems, opportunities and, perhaps, individuals so the facilitators will have to come up with suggestions.

The table "Who can help me learn" is a generalised list. Facilitators should add local organisations, as appropriate.

Section 6

This section is individual, so facilitators will need to plan group by group and person by person.

Section 7

Section 7 rounds up the work done previously. The individual learners need space to make their plans and to come to decisions. It is not likely that group discussion will help much here, so be prepared to advise individuals. Mind you, it may be that participants want to talk to each other and so support each other in this. So, if this is the case, then encourage it.

As with other sections, the facilitator will need to have resources providing the information needed to answer questions about learning opportunities, sources of advice, providers of services, accreditation systems and so on.

The outcome, for each learner, should be an individually designed learning action plan which has been derived from the individual's past experience, present situation and needs and reflects their realistic ambitions.

Introductory Module

Included as an appendix is an introductory module - in some ways this is a simplified version of the main pack, dealing with some, but not all of the areas covered in it. The facilitative methods, therefore, are the same as for the main pack, and all of the comments in the earlier part of this guide hold. Because the people using the introductory pack may be a little less experienced, more support may be needed and it will be particularly important to create a supportive group environment

The introductory module does reflect some of the sections of the main pack. You will find the information you need to help you deliver this module in the corresponding sections.

Conclusion

This material is not intended to be directive. The pack must be used as an enabling agent for individuals. Because of this, it is not possible to lay down hard-and-fast rules for delivery. This guide tries to offer some suggestions which might help but, in the end, it will be local facilitators, who know about local needs and local opportunities and systems who, together with the learners, decide how this work should be delivered and developed.

APPENDIX 1:
Your Life, Your Work, Your Future

Introductory Module

This module is designed to help you to think about yourself, your skills and what your ambitions might be. It is free-standing so you can use it and then move on, or you can use it as an introduction to the main self-development pack. Whether you decide to carry on or not is up to you.

The module is designed as a series of questions for you to answer, with a small amount of text to help you answer the questions.

There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions. Most of the questions are about you, and your experiences, so the only person who can answer these is you. Any questions that do not directly relate to you are about what you want to do. So, while you may want to talk to someone about your answer, it is still your answer, and so is in your control.

You may be doing this in a group, with a facilitator to help you, or you may be doing it on your own. If you are doing it on your own, then do not be afraid to ask for help from someone else, whether from your family, your workmates, bosses, friends or anywhere else. You will find that people are willing to help!

This module is about getting ready to take some preliminary steps on what could be a long trip, so make sure that you are comfortable when you start. Take breaks when you want to, and work at your own speed.

Above all else, enjoy doing it!

All you will need is a pen or pencil and a comfortable environment.

On the next few sheets, you will find some questions. They are straightforward, and ask you to think about yourself and the things you can do. Then you will need to think a little about the things you might want to do in the future.

You will see that some of the words are printed in italics. *These should help you by explaining the questions, or offering you some clues for your answers!*

My job - what do I do?

These questions are about your job, what you have to do in it and the skills that you have.

Use the spaces in the text to write down your answers

The title of my job is:

My main duties are:

Before I got this job, I already had qualifications as:

If you had no qualifications when you started, leave this question.

Before I got this job, I had been trained as:

If you had no training when you started, leave this question.

Since starting this job, I have been trained as:

In a normal day at work I do the following things:

Think about an ordinary day – what are your main activities? What machinery or equipment (if any) do you use? Do you work with other people, do you have to meet the public? What kind of decisions do you make in your work? Do you have any independence? In short, what makes up your job?

My skills

You may wonder what is meant by "skills". Stop wondering – a skill is anything you can do. Some things we do very well, and so we say we are highly skilled in that activity. In other areas, we may say that we have some skills and, in some others, that we are unskilled - that is, we cannot carry out the activity at all well. We can have skills in a lot of different ways, and a skill does not have to be something you do with your hands.

For example, there are communication skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing); manual skills (using your hands); skills in numbers; musical skills; performance skills; skills in dealing with people (interpersonal skills); skills in dealing with animals; learning skills (skills that help you learn); creative skills; skills of making things; skills at seeing connections between things; caring skills and so on.

There are many different groups of skills, and the ones listed above are just a few examples. Often, one skill covers many areas of activities – for example we may have to use numbers in many different ways and communication skills are important in all activities. You have skills but you may not recognise them as skills, so we need to take a look at this!

The next questions will help you to look at your skills, first in your job and then at other skills you have. You will need to make some lists in the tables below.

My work skills

This table has two columns. In the first one, write down the main activities of your job. Beside each activity, and in the second column, write down the skills that you have that let you carry out that activity.

Remember the different kinds of skills when you are filling out column 2!

Table 1

Column 1 - Job activities	Column 2 - The skills I use

Before we go onto Table 2, let us take another look at some skills that you may not realise you use.

An example of the skills you might have, but don't see as skills, comes from cooking. When you cook a meal, you show organisational and planning skills; communication skills; manual skills; number skills and creative skills. In the table below, the skills of cooking are listed. Beside each group, write down the activity that uses that skill. To help, the first skill has some activities suggested beside it.

Skills used in cooking: an example

Skill used	Activity
Number skill	Reading numbers (from recipe); timing cooking measuring ingredients; weighing; calculating amounts
Organisational and planning skills	
Communication skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking)	
Manual skills	
Creative skills	

My other skills

This table is for you to list the skills that you have that do not come from your work. Again, there are two columns. The first is for you to list the things that you do, the other for the skills that you use to do these things.

When you are filling out this table, think about your home life, hobbies, sports, activities with friends, your interests and the whole range of different things that make up your life.

Table 2

The things that I do	The skills that I use to do them

My skills and qualifications package

This exercise asks you to put together all of your skills and qualifications in one list. Use Tables 1 and 2 to complete the first two columns of Table 3. In the third column of Table 3, headed "Qualifications and training" write down any examinations you have passed, or any training courses you have done.

Table 3

My work skills	My skills from elsewhere	Qualifications and training

You now have analysed your skills and training!

Am I using all my skills?

Take a look at Table 3. Are there skills listed under column 2 that you do not use at work at the moment, that might help you to progress at work? Do you have any qualifications or training that you do not take advantage of at the moment? Does your employer know this?

To help you to think about this, please fill out Table 4.

Table 4 has two columns. In column 1, write down the skills that you have that you do not use in work. In column 2, write down the ways (if any) that you could use these skills to help you do better in work - perhaps you could get a better job, or more experience, if your employer knew more about what you can really do.

Table 4

Column 1 **Skills that I do not use in work**	**Column 2** **Ways I might use these skills in work**

There is one last exercise to do in this part, which should help you when you come to decide your next steps. When you get to that stage, you need to think about how to improve your skills. This will mean doing some new learning.

You need to think about what form of learning suits you best so that you can decide who can best help you develop your skills and what kind of situation helps you best.

Think of something that you enjoyed learning and that you learned well. It does not matter whether it was something practical or not.

Now complete the sentences below:

A thing that I enjoyed learning, and learned well was:

_____

_____

I learned it from_____

Was this a teacher, family member, friend, colleague, supervisor or who?

I showed that I had learned by:
To answer this, tick the method that was used to "test" and demonstrate your skills

A written test or examination

A practical test or examination

Making something

Telling people about what I had done

Some other way (what was it?)

I learned:

Formally *(that is, in a classroom, or other place, with formal "teaching", delivered through an organisation)*

Informally *(that is, not through some organised form and in a less formal way)*

The way I learned was by:
Here, write down what you can remember doing to learn successfully.
Was it, for example, by listening, copying, practising, working things out for yourself, trial and error, or some other way? Did you learn alone, or with a group?
What was it that most helped you learn successfully?

Now, you have thought about a good learning experience, in which you were successful and you know some of the things that help you learn.

This will help you to decide what kind of training or other activities you want to follow to improve your skills.

Next steps

So now you have thought about what you do, what your skills and qualifications are and how far you might go without any more training or learning.

This is all very well but, if it is to mean anything, now you have to think about where you want to go next. If you go on to use the main pack, then you will have the chance to look at your long- term ambitions, but for the time being, just think about the next step in your career.

Answer these questions:

What do I want to be doing in 12 months' time, in my job?

Do I want to:

Be doing the same job?

Be in the same area of work, but doing a more responsible job?

Be supervising other people at work?

Be doing a different job, using skills that I have now?

Be learning new skills to help me move on in my career?

By answering these questions, you have put down your immediate ambitions – you have stated your short-term goals. It will help you if you put these down in one short statement, by completing the sentence below :

In 12 months' time, I want to be _____

_____

Getting there

You know where you want to be. It may be a complete change, or it may be that you want to improve your skills in your present job, or anywhere in between.

Whatever it is, you need to decide what you need to do to move towards your goal.

You have to think about what you must do to improve your skills and so move towards your goal.

Firstly, what skills do you need to develop to achieve your goals? Are they new skills, or do you need to improve skills that you already have? Do you need to develop a skill that you have gained outside your present work?

Secondly, what must you do? For example, do you need to go on a course, get a workmate to show you how to do a particular job, simply find time to practise a particular skill or do a range of other activities?

It would help a lot at this point, if you are doing this on your own, to get advice from colleagues, your supervisor or somebody else at work, go to a professional careers advisor or talk to family or friends. If you are doing this in a group, then the group and your facilitator will be able to help you think this through.

When you have given some time to thinking, you can get your thoughts onto paper.

Again, it will be easier to do this in table form, to make up your immediate action plan.

Action plan

Fill out the spaces that are left for you. First, repeat your aim:
Remember, this is what you intend doing. Make sure that your aim is realistic – that is, that you are not trying to do too much, too soon.

Table 5

My target is to:

I will have done this by:
This is the time by which you intend achieving your aim.

To do this I will:
Here, list the things you need to do to achieve your aim. This could include taking advice, applying for a course, applying for a new job, asking colleagues for help, talking to your supervisor or personnel manager or whatever other steps you feel you need to take.

Now look at the list you have just written. Of all the steps in your list, which is the one you need to take first? Finish the sentence below, with what you will do first and when you will do it!

My first step will be to _____

I will do this _____

This is your promise to yourself, to get started! You have now finished this introductory module. You have thought about your job, your skills, both job-related and otherwise, and you have made some immediate plans.

You may want to go on to the main part of **Your Life, Your Work, Your Future**, or you may prefer to come back to it later.

Whatever you decide to do, it is up to you!

Using Employee Development Schemes as Innovative Workplace-Based Social Partnerships in Learning: Development of Transnational Learning Materials

A Project, supported by EU Leonardo Funding

Throughout Europe, enterprise depends upon the skills and dedication of workers at all levels. Many workers are either unqualified, underqualified or inappropriately qualified and so trapped in jobs which offer them no chance of promotion or other development within work.

Collectively, business recognises the value of training and developing the workforce. However, this recognition does not always get translated into action and, particularly, does not often, if ever, offer any benefit to less skilled workers who tend to remain in the same, usually repetitive grooves for their working lives. From the point of view of business, the pace and degree of change, driven by economic and technological developments, mean that training is essential to produce a flexible, competent and confident workforce that can support productive and efficient working and so keep enterprises competitive within their market. It can be argued that change is now constant and that, therefore, the need to develop staff is also constant so as to ensure effective use of resources for the present and the future.

For the individual, opportunities for self-development are essential, if potential is to be recognised and nurtured. Those who are less well qualified or who have no recognised qualifications are at a particular disadvantage, as they are less likely to derive much job satisfaction and are at greater risk of job loss than their better qualified and more highly skilled colleagues.

Industry now needs teams, and greater importance is placed on decision making by employees than previously. So workers need skills that relate not only to their occupation but also include the key skills of numeracy, literacy, problem solving, coping with change and the personal skills of communication and cooperation. Workers also need an understanding of modern technology as it applies to their work.

All of this means that, without instruments to support employee development, business will suffer and individual and collective potential will not be realised. This project seeks to provide a tool for use by those who have few qualifications or whose qualifications may not be recognised or are seen as irrelevant. It intends to improve opportunities among unqualified people by developing their readiness to learn and by empowering them in making decisions about their own futures. The people whom the project seeks to support are those whose skills are seen as less relevant and less important so increasing their risk of social exclusion through redundancy.

Project Partners

Co-ordinated by the UK, the partners in the project come from 4 EU states, Ireland, France, Greece and the United Kingdom. In each country, the lead partner has worked with partners from within their own state. The partners are (lead partners first):

Ireland:

NCIR
National College of Industrial Relations

National College for Industrial Relations (a University Sector institute)

ESB

The Electricity Supply Board

SIPTU

SIPTU (a Trade Union)

France:

acerep s.a.

ACEREP (Employment, Training, Education and Human Resource Consultancy)

EDF GDF

Electricité et Gaz de France

Auchan

AUCHAN (a supermarket group)

Greece:

Western Greece and Epirus UETP (Training and Education Consultancy)

TCS
Member of ZEUS

Total Consultancy Services SA

ΕΜΠΕΙΡΟΓΝΩΜΩΝ
computers

Empirognomon

United Kingdom:

NIACE

National Institute of Adult Continuing Education

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Ltd

EDAP

Ford Motor Company Limited, UK, EDAP

Your Life
Your Work
Your Future

This material has been produced with the support of the European Union LEONARDO DA VINCI programme and is an outcome of the work of a project partnership based in France, Greece, Ireland and the UK. A full list of partners is included at the back of this pack.

The pack is aimed at people in work who want to think about where they are in their careers and in their lives, what they are doing now and what they might want to do in the future and how they can set about improving their education and training and so their future employability. It can be used by anybody who might benefit from it, but should be of greatest use to those who need to improve their skills to allow for their development.

The pack can be used by individuals or in a group context and a short facilitator's guide is included in the materials. There is also a short introductory module (which appears as an appendix and is also available separately) designed for use by those who feel the need for support before tackling the main exercises.

These materials are also available in printed form in the French and Greek languages and may be downloaded from the Internet in all three languages, from http://www.niace.org.uk

£6.00

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